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TAGS: PGOV PREL UNFICYP TU CY

SUBJECT: SRSG MOLLER ON CYPRUS TALKS

REF: SCHLICHER-BRYZA EMAIL (08/02/2006

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald L. Schlicher, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On August 4, SRSG Moller briefed the Ambassador on recent developments since the exchange of lists earlier in the week. In contrast to his (ref) optimism on August 2, he noted with frustration two problems Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat has raised with him earlier that day:

A) Terminology. Talat is still hung up on the question of "sides" versus "communities," and apparently subjected Moller to the usual lecture on why these terms made a difference in Turkish Cypriot theology. Moller noted both Greek and Turkish Cypriots "cherry pick" precedents on this matter, with the Turkish Cypriots pointing to the post-1999 Good Offices Mission "sides" terminology, and the Greek Cypriots relying on the 1992 UNSCR outlining political equality between the two "communities." Talat has asked the UN for a formal statement clarifying this matter once and for all -- and suggested that the issue could be a show-stopper for the Turkish Cypriots. Moller said he would relay this request to NYC, but doubts that a final determination is something the Secretariat can come up with. Their lawyers did not want to

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touch what is essentially a political question, and it would take further UNSC action to reconcile various terminology from UNSCRs past. This is unlikely in Moller's view.

B) True to their previous wariness of "piecemeal" dialogue in lieu of substantive negotiations (and suspicious of the Greek Cypriot list from July 31, which details issues the ROC wants to "study"), the Turkish Cypriots are insisting that the UN make a clear, public statement of what the current process is -- and have asked Moller for a 3-way meeting with Annan or Gambari to clarify the question. Talat would like to see a new special representative and the formal relaunch of the Good Offices Mission. Moller said this was a "fantasy"; the UN will not engage more until there is progress on the current track. Turkish Cypriot dogmatic insistence on full negotiations, formally identified as such and based on the Annan Plan, is threatening to derail the process.

¶2. (C) All of this is putting the proposed leaders' meeting next week in limbo. Moller will continue to talk with Tzionis and Pertev -- and may try to get Papadopoulos and Talat together alone, without note-takers, on August 10th -- to get past this threatened impasse.

¶3. (C) Moller and the Greek Cypriots feel that Talat's prickliness is a result of pressure from Ankara. Moller asked the United States weigh in with the GOT to stress how important it is that this process move forward -- and how bad it would be for Turkey if they were blamed for a collapse. Moller recognizes that he is damaged goods in the eyes of the Turks, which he worries undercuts his ability to deliver this message.

14. (C) COMMENT: It may be that Talat is taking the hard line at Ankara's instruction. It may also be that Turkey has simply not invested itself positively in the Moller effort -- and that absent at least tacit encouragement from the GOT, Talat is hesitant to emerge from his defensive crouch.

Either way, the key to moving forward lies with Ankara. We will press Talat -- and encourage Embassy Ankara to press the GOT -- to put aside the fundamentally stupid issues of labels and protocol and get down to business. Only then will Papadopoulos be put to the test -- and be faced with the choice of negotiating seriously on tough issues, or resuming the role of "Mr. No" he has managed to dodge successfully over the past year. For the moment, the tactics chosen by Talat and/or Ankara are painting the Turkish Cypriots as the obstructionist party, and giving Papadopoulos a free ride on the substance. While the Turkish Cypriots need to be "one step ahead" diplomatically, at this point they are poised to take two steps back. END COMMENT.

SCHLICHER